

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

27 Nov 78

Honorable Malcolm Wallop
Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wallop:

Thank you for your letter of 12 October 1978 (Q6007).

We are indeed agreed that the expression of divergent views on significant issues be encouraged within the Intelligence Community and that ways be found for these views--and their supporting argumentation--to be surfaced in our publications. Crucial to this is the creation of an atmosphere in which individuals know that dissenting opinions will receive a hearing and be judged on their merits.

25X1 I have recently taken two organizational steps--and given those steps wide publicity--with the aim of letting Agency employees from top to bottom know where I stand on this issue. One move was the creation of an NIO for Warning with responsibility to take a "second-look" at our analysis and reporting of developments of major concern to the U.S. Government. Mr. Dick Lehman will be my ombudsman on this subject, and I have encouraged anyone who believes a serious threat is being overlooked to bring his or her concerns directly to him. Second, I have designated my Special Assistant [redacted] as the person through whom matters of significant substantive dissent can be brought to the attention of Frank Carlucci and myself. I am enclosing a copy of "Notes From the Director" which describes these steps in greater detail. (Tab A) This publication goes to every Agency employee.

I am also pleased to report that we have made progress in putting together a Senior Review Panel of outside experts, with some members serving full time but on limited appointments. They will examine National Estimates and other major pieces of Community production. I want them to ask hard questions of our line analysts and to challenge the conventional findings and methodology. I intend to stay in close and direct touch with them to ensure their views are not lost or ignored.

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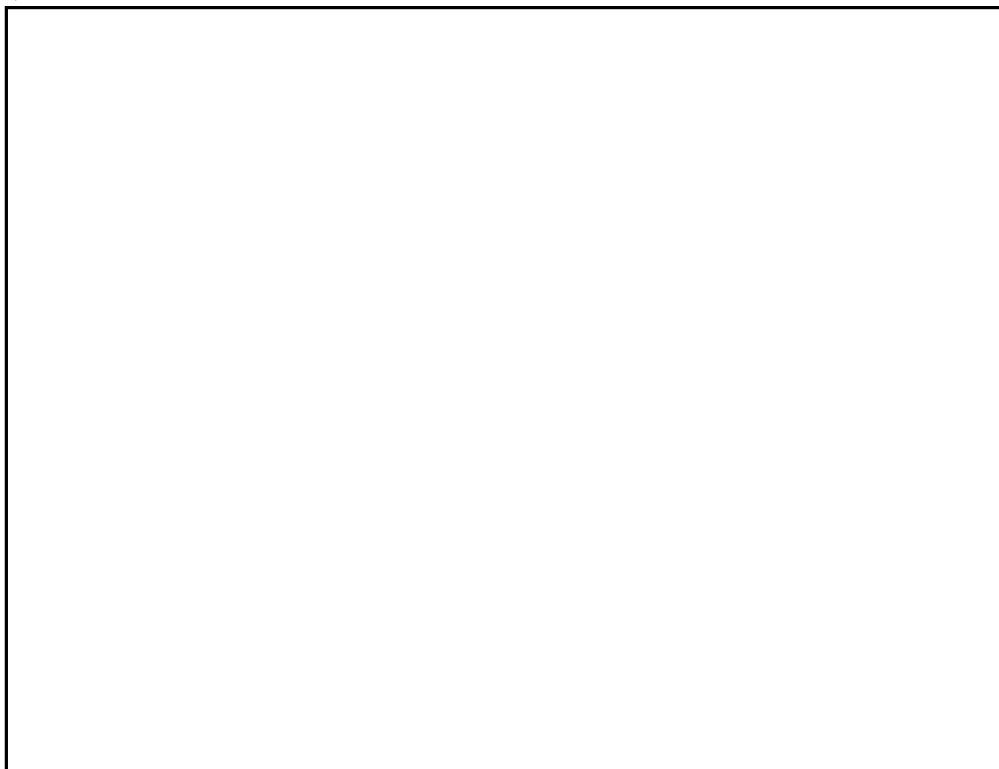
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Incidentally, the panel of outside specialists that we have been working with throughout the process of putting together this year's Estimate on strategic forces has been most helpful, and the panel members themselves came away impressed with the quality of the people and work here.

I also consider it important that where divergent views exist in the Community they be brought to the attention of the consumers of our intelligence product. We do this in our daily publications by printing items in the National Intelligence Daily written by State Department's INR and by Defense's DIA and NSA. By-line articles in the NID offer the opportunity for individual analysts to express views on a subject without rigorous Interagency coordination. Where there are disagreements on important substantive points, these are expressed, and I am including a few recent examples. (Tab B) Where such disagreements arise in the NID production process, I have instructed that they also be reflected in the President's Daily Brief.

Over the years, National Estimates and other Interagency publications have, of course, included divergent views. It is difficult to show statistically whether these find more or less expression from year to year. New evidence removes some issues from the divergent view category, and most estimates are not published on as regular a basis or in as consistent a format as 11-3/8. Nevertheless, it is instructive to look at the range of issues on which divergent or alternative views were set forth in the most recent estimate on Soviet strategic forces, 11-3/8-77:

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At Tab C I am enclosing examples of how three of these divergent views were handled. Paragraphs 57-61 of Chapter II discuss Backfire performance. Paragraphs 4-10 of Chapter III take up the Community differences over the large phased-array radars. Paragraphs 24-27 of Chapter III discuss Soviet ABM research.

NIE 4-1-78 which deals with how the Warsaw Pact might go to war and the implications for the amount of warning time available to NATO also contains significant dissent. This centered on the circumstances that might lead the Pact to initiate war after building up only to a two-front force. An attack with a force this size rather than a larger one would, of course, reduce the warning time for the West. To illustrate how this dissent was handled and to provide some context, I am enclosing at Tab C the entire section describing Soviet attack options. The actual dissents appear in paragraphs 65-66 and 74-75.

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These examples show, I believe, that when the divergencies are put into the text not only are they highlighted, but there is an important additional benefit. Frequently in the past the easy way to avoid having to explain why there were divergencies was simply to let each person who held the divergent view express it in a footnote. As we have forced them to come together and display their dissenting opinions alongside each other in the main body of the papers, we have found that the explication of the differences between them has become much more clear. This is not

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to say that we have ended up with a compromise that did away with the differences; quite the contrary. We have found that it has brought out the rationale for the differences and forced everyone to think about those differences. It is easy for anyone to hold his own obdurate view but when he is forced to explain exactly why it differs with someone else's obdurate view, he often finds that he has to be more explicit than he was when he was just holding forth on his own. In short, I believe that the quality of the basic analysis has frequently been improved by the process of being forced to lay divergent views side by side and dissect them.

As I said at the outset, I regard this as a matter of great importance. I will continue to work to ensure that all within the Community fully recognize that a first-rate intelligence product demands that no lights be hidden under bushels.

Yours sincerely,

/s/

STANSFIELD TURNER

Enclosures

Disbribution:

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